Headless Public Sector Fertilizer Undertakings

2914. SHRI VIRENDRA KATARIA: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) the names of Public Sector Fertilizer Undertakings which are headless and for how long;

(b) whether it is a fact that National Fertilizers Ltd. which is a model public sector undertaking is without a regular Managing Director for a long time; and

(c) whether it is not affecting the efficient working of these undertakings and the steps Government are taking to fill these posts?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI SIS RAM OLA): (a) and (b) National Fertilizers Limited (NFL) has been without a regular incoumbent for the post of chief executive since 24.5.1996. The post of Chairman & Managing Director (CMD), Hindustan Fertilizer Corporation Limited (HFC) has fallen vacant recently after completion of the tenure of its incumbent on 15.03.1997.

(c) Steps for selection of regular incumbents to these posts have been initiated. In the interregnum, additional charge has been given of these posts to CMDs of other public sector undertakings in order that their working is not affected.

Erratic production and supply of fertilizers

2915. SHRI VIRENDRA KATARIA: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in manypublic sector . Fertilizer plants production is erratic causing disruption in supply in the market;

(b) whether it is also a fact that to make the matter worse there is a shortage of bags in many plants which further delays the supply of Fertilizers; and

(c) whether it is also a fact that inferior type of bags are used and there are many scandals in the purchase of bags, if so, the details thereof and the action taken by Government to check such malpractices?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI SIS RAM OLA): (a) The production performance of some of the public sector fertilizer plants during the current year has been affected due to recurrent constraints in the availability of raw materials and utilities, equipment related problems, movement bottlenecks and financial stringency.

The overall availability of ferilizers in the market is the function of the opening stocks/indigenous production and imports, besides propoer arrangements for movement and timely distribution of fertilizers. Any shortfall in the production of a given unit is made good from alternative sources of supply, including imports. During the current Rabi Season, the availability of urea, which is the only fertilizer under statutory price, distribution and movement controls, has been adequate to support the sales, which have been 10% higher than the sales in the corresponding period of the previous year.

The availability of decontrolled fertilizers is decided by the market forces of demand and supply.

(b) There have been no reports of shortages of bags affecting the supply of fertilizers.

(c) A preliminary enquiry conducted by National Fertilizers Ltd. has revealed that there was a prima-facie case of irregularity in the matter of purchase of bagging material by its Bhatinda unit. The case has been handed over to the CBI for detailed investigation. In the meantime, four officers involved in the matter have been placed under suspension.